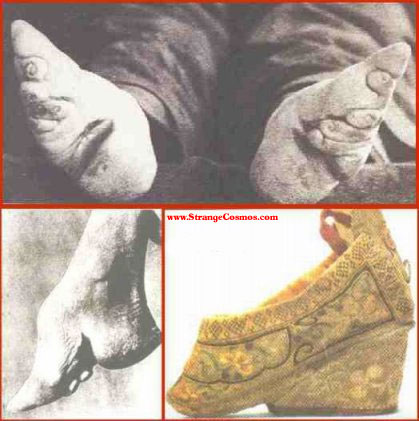
<http://www.myseveralworlds.com/2007/07/11/suffering-for-beauty-graphic-photos-of-chinese-footbinding/>

<http://www.sfmuseum.org/chin/foot.html>

Foot Binding

Foot binding is a custom that started in China during the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907). Back then small feet were considered beautiful so young girls were forced to bind their feet to stop them from growing.  
Foot binding involved wrapping strips of cloth around the feet of baby girls. The cloth pushed the small toes under the foot. This broke made the foot bow and brought the big toe and heel closer together. The strips would be tightened every day and the girls would have to walk with their feet bound. The small toes would break and the whole foot became deformed. The purpose of binding was to keep feet from growing larger than 10cm, or 3.9 inches. This binding process caused a lot of pain and even stopped them from walking correctly. Feet would become so deformed they looked like hooks and were called lotus hooks. Special small slippers were made to fit the feet. The shoes would get smaller as the feet became more deformed.

The picture to the left shows unwrapped feet and the tiny slipper that was made to fit a bound foot

At first only the rich people of China practiced foot binding. This was because women with bound feet could not walk properly and needed a lot of care. Bound feet had to be washed daily and the toenails had to be cut every day so that they wouldn't grow too long and cut the foot. Sometimes the cloth would be wrapped too tightly and women would get gangrene or blood poisoning. Poor people didn't bind their daughters feet at first because they couldn't afford to spend a lot of time caring for a women who sat around not working. Eventually, the practice spread to the poor people who wanted their daughters to marry rich husbands. If a poor girl did not marry a rich husband, she had to try to work in the fields walking on her deformed feet.  
The practice of foot binding lasted until 1911, and was banned during the revolution of Sun Yat-Sen. During the time that the custom was practiced, millions of women had their feet bound and deformed.

X-ray of bound feet